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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: WESTERN HEMISPHERE: ECUADOR, LEFTIST  
LEANINGS IN LATIN AMERICA; SAO PAULO

"Latin America Sees Growth Of 'Pragmatic Left Wing'"

International writer Raul Juste Lores commented (11/28) in liberal, largest national circulation daily Folha de S. Paulo: "Leftist Rafael Correa's electoral victory in Ecuador resumed the discussion on Latin America's leftist leanings and Hugo Chavez's influence in the region. Candidates supported by the Venezuelan president in Peru and Mexico were defeated, and that fact was interpreted as a limit of Chavez's influence. But the victories of Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua and Correa in Ecuador have shown that Chavez is not alone.

Latin American political analysts, however, see in all this more than a supposed dispute between nations aligned with Venezuela and those pro-U.S. What prevails in the region is pragmatism, they say. Several governments are receptive to foreign investment, maintain good relations with Washington and did not reverse economic reforms carried out in the 90's. At the same time, they prioritize a social dialogue with income distribution programs for the millions of poor citizens who gained little with the neoliberal reforms.... In addition to an anti-American and anti-neoliberal discourse, Chavez, Correa and Bolivian President Evo Morales have in common the will to create their nations' political system and institutions.... Analysts also say that after his reelection, Brazilian President Lula may once again turn his attention to regional problems as a mediator. It is in the area of trade policies and international alignments that such speculations on ideologies become more concrete. A bloc that has more vigorously emerged in Latin America is that of nations that had signed bilateral trade agreements with the U.S. With the Democrats' victory in the U.S. midterm elections, this gradual FTAA will slow down and regional blocs like Mercosul will gain more power." McMullen